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ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9437
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 2798
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 0620
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0496
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0571
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 001035

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STATE FOR SCA/CEN AND DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/26/2017

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SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: CONDITIONS IN OWADAN PRISON
REPORTEDLY IMPROVED

REF: ASHGABAT 1030

Classified By: CHARGE RICHARD E. HOAGLAND FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) A longtime Embassy contact, whose brother was imprisoned for the 2002 attack on the presidential motorcade, spoke recently with one of the 11 individuals granted clemency in August. (NOTE: The contact did not specify which one. END NOTE.) This person told our contact that rumors she had heard last summer that her brother had died in prison were false. Shortly before his release, the former prisoner had seen her brother and could confirm that he was very much alive. He said the brother, as well as some others connected to the 2002 attack on Niyazov's motorcade, remain in Owadan Depe prison and are not being sent to prisons in Turkmenbashi and Bayramaly, where conditions had been rumored to be better. That said, this source said conditions at Owadan Depe are improving. Extra food parcels are being provided to the prisoners and torture of prisoners had stopped.

¶2. (C) According to the Embassy contact, her source estimates that 360 individuals were imprisoned in connection with the motorcade attack. (NOTE: No official figure has ever been released. END NOTE.)

¶3. (C) COMMENT: There have been many rumors about Owadan Depe prison, which is widely reputed to have the worst conditions of any penal institution in Turkmenistan. Even if the president does not pardon all individuals imprisoned in connection with the 2002 motorcade attack during the annual "Night of Omnipotence" amnesty (this year reported to be more than 9,000 individuals), the news that conditions are improving for those who continue to wait for a pardon is welcome and offers hope that the president might eventually deliver on the promise he made to UK Minister of Energy Malcolm Wicks to release "prisoners of concern." END COMMENT.
HOAGLAND